

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed January 2, 2004, the Examiner noted that claims 1-28 were pending, objected to claims 8, 13, 19 and 24 and rejected claims 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-28. Claims 8, 13, 19 and 24 have been amended, new claim 29 has been added and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 1-29 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

In the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 8, 13, 19 and 24 and indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. These claims have been so rewritten and it is submitted that these claims have not been narrowed and have the same scope as prior to being made independent and are now allowable. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-28 under 35 U.S.C. section 102 as anticipated by Tsuda.

The present invention is designed to tell a user who inputs a question based database query and gets a response, which words played a key role in what was retrieved. The response indicates the contribution or weight that each query word makes or contributes to result of the search (see "calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution unit" - claim 1 and similar language in claims 10, 14, 21, 25, 26, 27 and 28). That is, the contribution to the search result is determined or calculated by the system doing the search. In this way the user can see which words were most important and change the query to obtain a better search result.

Tsuda is directed to a system in which the user sets the priority level of strings used in a search before the search is conducted. See:

A user inputs to a document retrieving apparatus a retrieval string whose priority level is represented by using multiple of highlight levels, such as a degree of a font size and the like. A document retrieving apparatus retrieves a document including the retrieval string from a database and displays the retrieval string included in the retrieval result on a screen at the same highlight level as that at a time of inputting. In this way, the strings having different priority levels within the document are displayed at highlight levels different from each other. It is possible to specify a new retrieval string within the document of the retrieval result to thereby carry out a re-retrieval.

(See Abstract)

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a document retrieving apparatus and a method thereof, wherein a user can intuitively input a priority level of a retrieval character string in order to retrieve a document including a given character string from a data base, and wherein the retrieval result is

outputted on the basis of the inputted priority level.
(See Tsuda, col. 3, lines 26-32)

As can be seen from the above excerpts, Tsuda is directed to a system that allows the user to specify how the search should be conducted. In contrast, the present invention informs the user of how the search result was obtained.

It is submitted that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Tsuda and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

The dependent claims depend from the above-discussed independent claims and are patentable over the prior art for the reasons discussed above. The dependent claims also recite additional features not taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 7 emphasizes that the question is divided into words and the contribution for each of the words of the question string is calculated. Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests this. The remaining dependent claims also patentably distinguish over the prior art for their recitations. It is submitted that the dependent claims are independently patentable over the prior art.

New claim 29 emphasizes that the invention indicates the weight that each word of a multiple word search contributed to the search results. Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that the new claim distinguishes over the prior art.

It is also submitted that claims 8, 13, 19 and 24 continue to be allowable. It is further submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

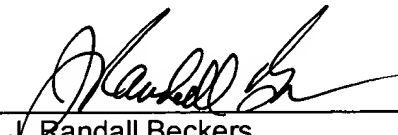
Respectfully submitted,

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